ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A coding and decoding apparatus is constructed so that the coding side transmits coded data together with identifying information for identifying the device of decoding the coded data, and the decoding side is capable of storing a number of decoding schemes so as to perform decoding based on one of the previously stored schemes. The apparatus further has devices for storing the received tools and tool-correspondent information which numerically represents the capacities of the tools so that it can make a comparison between the decoding capacity and the processing capacities of the tools to determine the possibility of the operations of the received tools. Further, a set of the tools are hierarchized so that the coded data produced by the n-ranked tool can be decoded by the (n+1)-ranked tool. Alternatively, the tools are defined in a hierarchical manner so that the decoding tools installed in the decoding apparatus will be able to assure the minimum quality and the requested decoding process can be performed by the received decoding tool. Further, the identification code of the decoding scheme used can be transmitted as required so that the decoding scheme can be expanded by transmitting the differential information from the basic decoding scheme.